



Weekly Health Tip:

Shaping Kids' Body Image

The relationship between food and body image is strong and begins when we are young. It's National Nutrition Month and now is a great time to learn ways to positively shape your child's body image and food perspective. "Parents play a crucial role in helping children develop a positive body image and healthy habits," an expert says.

'Sometimes, we parents forgot how important our words, thoughts, and feelings are in the lives of our kids . . . especially when it comes to eating behaviors and body image. As parents, we must be mindful of our own relationship with our bodies, how we eat, and the potential impact on our kids.' Dr. Aaron Krasner, director of the adolescent transitional living program at Silver Hill Hospital in New Canaan, Conn., said in a news release.

Krasner noted that **80 percent of 10-year-old children are afraid of being fat**, according to the National Eating Disorders Association.

Krasner outlined the following ways that parents can help their children:

- Don't criticize yourself or others about weight or shape in front of youngsters.
- Don't make negative comments about food, such as "I can't eat potatoes because they're carbs." Instead, teach children the importance of good nutrition and exercise without mentioning weight.

- Praise children on their talents and achievements.
- Explain to youngsters that weight gain and changes in body shape are a natural part of the growing process.
- Talk to children about what they see in the media and remind them of things such as that only 5 percent of American women have the so-called "ideal" body type portrayed in ads.

‘At the end of the day, parents are the most influential role models in a child's life, so be mindful of your words and actions. They may be listening when you least expect it,’ Krasner said.”

Source: Aaron Krasner, M.D., director, adolescent transitional living program, Silver Hill Hospital, New Canaan, Conn., news release, February 2014 HealthDay